May 22, 1969 WMUA

To:
The University Broadcasting Council
The University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees

There apparently has been some confusion concerning the status of two seemingly conflicting reports sent by UMUA's consulting engineering firm of Kear and Kennedy concerning WMUA's need and desires to go higher power. Jay and I were unaware that this confusion existed until after the Broadcasting Council meeting of the 22nd and hope that we can now clear matters up.

First, we wish to apologize for being unable to duplicate copies of the original Kear and Kennedy report in time for the first Council meeting. This was impossible to do, although most of the questions now raised by the Council could have been cleared up at that time.

Second, we wish to clear up the status of the two Kear and Kennedy reports and point out that they, in fact, are not in conflict with each other.

The original Kear and Kennedy report was done over a year ago and was intended only to be a PRELIMINARY report on conditions at the University of Massachusetts. At that time all we asked Kear and Kennedy to do was to survey the area and tell us how it might be possible to improve our signal. Based on this request, Kear and Kennedy conducted a survey and came up with several alternatives that we might try. One of these alternatives was to remain at 10 watts and move our transmitting facilities to Orchard Hill, another was to increase power. This report was not intended to make a recommendation as to which alternative would be better, since Kear and Kennedy did not have all the information pertinent to our request, but rather, it was intended to serve as a general guideline, to be taken into consideration for whatever we wished to do. You will note, though, that although the report initially recommended trying first a move to Orchard Hill at 10 watts, the report does not pretend to deem whether such a move would, indeed, be in the best interests of the station.

After this initial survey was made, Jay spent a good deal of time in consultation with Neil Smith, our direct contact at Kear and Kennedy. In the course of this consultation, WMUA's goals were outlined for Kear and Kennedy. Basically, they consist of

1. Effectively covering the entire UMass campus with a signal that can be easily heard, considering average terrain conditions
2. Effectively covering the surrounding area for a radius of about ten miles with a signal that can be easily heard, primarily for the benefit of UMass commuter students, but also for the benefit of area and other college residents; (with the realization that part of our increased responsibility would be to help, not hinder, the image of the University of Massachusetts)
3. Effectively covering the area with a signal that would be capable of transmitting full fidelity stereo

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4. Keeping in mind the fact that, although we were aware of the added responsibility that comes with an increase in power and/or coverage area and were prepared to accept and handle such responsibility, our primary concern was first to effectively serve the students of the University of Massachusetts. Therefore, if a power increase were to be deemed advisable we wished to keep it to a power that could be reasonably justified in terms of our needs and in terms of what would be in our best interests, considering the status of low power stations now with the FCC

Upon hearing the complete goals and desires of WMUA, Kaar and Kennedy then advised us that, all things considered, if it were financially feasable, it would be in WMUA's best interests to increase power to at least 1000 watts without first attempting a move at 10 watts.

There were a number of reasons for this recommendation. Basically they were

1. To cover the area we wished to in the manner outlined above, it would be highly unlikely that 10 watts would be anywhere near sufficient

2. To broadcast high quality stereo to a large enough percentage of the audience we would be serving, 1000 watts would be the most highly desirable minimum power we could use.
(As an aside: stereo operation, although not absolutely necessary at this time, would be highly desirable
   a) because a stereo signal improves the quality of reception even on a mono receiver
   b) stereo very definitely is the thing of the future. With or without an FCC mandate it is not unreasonable to expect that most fm stations will be broadcasting in stero within the next five years)

3. There is currently a lot of discussion going on at the FCC concerning the use of the fm band. A change in allocation of space on the fm band could come about as early as the end of this year. Speculation is that, especially with the congestion of the fm band in Eastern Massachusetts, ten watt stations might be grouped more closely together, if not eliminated entirely. This means that assuming the FCC has no desire to eliminate these stations, WMUA could very possibly wind up with other ten watt stations so close to it that it might be impossible for WMUA to increase power at a later date without interfering with those other stations. (We make no threat that a move such as this is bound to happen, but, as stated, a report on the use of the fm band will be ready by the end of this year and the outcome we have mentioned is a very definite possibility)

4. There is the common sense rule that power increases are currently granted on a first-come-first-serve basis. It is an established fact that the Western Massachusetts fm band is highly congested. At the moment WMUA has no competition for a power increase. There is no guarantee that this will always be the case, especially if anything dramatic does come from the study of the fm band. If the money is available now and the programming is of satisfactory quality and if the station has really serious plans of attempting higher power at any point in the future, it would be wisest and most desirable to go for the power increase now while we are assured of having the most in our favor

In addressing the Broadcasting Council, Jay and I were basing our argument on the subsequent recommendations of Kear and Kennedy. We thought we had made clear the fact that the written report we had was only a preliminary study and had been updated upon further consultation with our consulting firm. This is why we were a bit confused when the question was posed to us as to whether the subsequent letter from Kear and Kennedy was a revision of their original statement. Their original study was never meant to be their final recommendation. The purpose of our obtaining the second letter was to have in writing for the Council that which had been discussed and decided subsequent to the original report.

It is our hope that this statement will clear up some of the confusion that now exists. Once again, we appologize for not having time to duplicate the original report prior to the first Council meeting. We ask now, however, that you take these matters into account and report favorably on our request for a power increase to 1000 watts. It is a fact that WMUA cannot be heard on many parts of this campus. It is a fact that WMUA has the support, both morally and financially, to increase power. It is a fact that WMUA has the backing of both the UMass student body and the student senate. It is a fact that WMUA is prepared and willing to take on the added responsibilities of a 1000 watt broadcaster. (The University's own consulting firm's report on WMUA lists the technincal responsibilites of a high power station and WMUA can prove that has for a long time met these responsibilities, even at ten watts. In the area of programming, WMUA has engaged five highly respected broadcasters, each in a different area of programming, to add to our faculty advisors. While WMUA does not wish to come under direct control of any one department, we are more than willing to work with all departments at the University to continue to improve our instructional programming.)

In essence, WMUA feels that it is conforming to all the standards of a higher power station in every respect except in the power. We don't pretend to be infallible or to be 100% correct. We are anxious to work, however, and hope that the Broadcasting Council and the Board of Trustees will recognize this desire and will have enough faith in the continued success of WMUA to allow us to take this major step forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Stadlen and Jay Ballard